

Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference

Bali, December 3 – 6, 2013

Statement by H.E. Ms. Zorica Maric-Djordjevic

**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to
the WTO**

Chairman, Director General, distinguished ministers, ladies and gentleman

On behalf of the Government of Montenegro, I would first like to thank our hosts for their hard work in organizing the MC9. I would also like to use this opportunity to welcome Yemen as a new member of the WTO. We believe that each new member contributes to the strengthening of the multilateral trade system.

Montenegro, as a recent WTO Member, undertakes its membership commitments and obligations with great seriousness and dedication. I am pleased to inform you of the activities that Montenegro has undertaken in the first years of its WTO membership.

Believing in the economic benefits of market liberalization, Montenegro has engaged in negotiations on the expansion of the ITA agreement. Although not an IT country, we recognize the importance of this Agreement and strive to put our country on the radar as an IT business-friendly and conducive environment. We remain positive that the ITA negotiations will be finalized in the near future.

Montenegro believes in the positive effects on job creation and growth from opening up the government procurement markets.

That is why we have engaged in the process of accession to the GPA in an efficient and ambitious manner. Having had successful and positive negotiations, we are certain that our efforts and commitments will be recognized and that Montenegro will be able to fully join the GPA family early next year.

Let me address now the recent negotiations and developments in the Doha Round, that is, the so-called Bali package.

In the past weeks we have felt renewed energy in the WTO brought by the new leadership. To that extent, allow me to express appreciation for all the efforts made to facilitate an MC9 deal, particularly those of DG Roberto Azevedo who has managed to mobilize delegations to engage in negotiations with renewed commitment and in good faith.

Montenegro is aware of the difficulties of finding an agreement in the multilateral context. But we are also aware of the immense benefits that the MC9 package, consisting of trade facilitation, a set of agricultural issues and the development pillar, would bring.

To that end, we would like to welcome and encourage the ongoing consultations of Director General and we expect and hope that this will result in finalizing the negotiating texts and remaining gaps in the agriculture and development pillars.

The Trade Facilitation Agreement will have great impact on development and economic growth. For small countries like Montenegro, which rely on the open trading system, this agreement is seen as an engine for economic growth and a safeguard against protectionism.

Montenegro supports the development content of the Doha Round and the need for meaningful integration of developing, and particularly the least developed, countries, in the international trade community. To this effect, we attach great importance to the development pillar of the MC9 package and its benefits for their long-term economic perspectives.

We would like to reiterate our belief that a strong multilateral rule-based trading system is the key for global economic welfare, sustainable development and poverty reduction. In these challenging times, we would like to express our commitment to working towards compromise and solutions. We believe that the WTO is a negotiating forum capable of delivering this. We believe that the WTO can deal with the modern challenges of the world trade system. But in order to do so, we must have a clear understanding of the way forward. MC9 is providing us the chance to carry on our obligation and to chart that clear guidance for the future progress and economic security of our nations, by adopting the Bali package.

Thank you.